

Feel You're Presentable by TolkienScholar

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Characters: Jonathan B.

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Summary: Drabble (x5). Tag to Ep. 1x5. "Behave" has meant a lot of things over the years. Today it means putting on a suit and tie and pretending you don't hate Lonnie's guts long enough to get through Will's funeral. But the tie part is going to be a problem.

Feel You're Presentable

Disclaimer: I do not own *Stranger Things*. No copyright infringement is intended. The title is a loose reference to "The Logical Song" by Supertramp.

MC4A Fill Number: Ornate Oscillating Obelisks, Fill #2; Seriously Important (Not), Fill #2; Eternal Rhapsody, Fill #4; Snicket Fence, Fill #7; Terms of Service, Fill #7; By Any Other Name, Fill #9; Fem Power Challenge, Fill #9; Specious Narrative, Fill #3

Individual Challenges: In a Flash (N); New Fandom Smell (N); Glossary (N); Old Flames (N); Rian-Russo Inversion (N); Tissue Warning (N); Interesting Times (N); Themes & Things A—Injustice (N); Themes & Things B—Deception (N)

Representations: Jonathan Byers; Lonnie Byers; Joyce Byers; Byers Family; Pretending Perfection; Failed Fatherhood; Verbal/Emotional Abuse; Physical Abuse; Breaking the Chains

Bonus Challenges: Lovely Coconuts; Second Verse (Mouth of Babes; Tomorrow's Shade; Unwanted Advice; Nontraditional; Not a Lamp; Persistence Still)

Tertiary Bonus Challenges: Rail, Negate

Summer Bingo Space Address: 2C – Freedom

Word Count: 500

Tag to Ep. 1x5: "The Flea and the Acrobat"

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Behave has meant a lot of things over the years. "Shut up, kid, nobody wants to hear your jabbering." "Speak up, kid, what's wrong with you?" "Go to your room, you little brat." "You'd better get out here right now before I count to three." "Turn it down." "Turn it off." "Don't wear that." "Don't watch that." "At least *try* to act like a normal kid for once." "Don't you dare tell anyone where that bruise came from, or else."

Today, *behave* means putting on a suit and tie and pretending you

don't hate Lonnie's guts long enough to get through the funeral. Long enough to let him pretend for the neighbors' sakes that you're this perfect nuclear family rocked by a terrible tragedy, and Lonnie's come back like the perfect father to bring the peace and comfort and stability you and your Mom desperately need. And just like always, you're going to play along.

Except for one thing: you can't figure out how to tie the tie. You fold the ends over each other, loop and tuck them every way you can think of, twist the tie all around your neck, but no matter what you do the knot doesn't form.

Lonnie knows how to do it. You remember watching him as a kid before church on Sunday mornings, not because your family was ever particularly religious, but because Lonnie thought it looked good to show up with his wife and kids, all dressed to the nines, and drop a wad of cash into the collection plate when it came around (mostly ones and fives, but wrap a twenty around the outside and who's going to know?). You could ask him. It's one of those things dads are supposed to do, showing their sons how to tie a tie, or so you've heard anyway.

But that would be admitting you need a dad, and you don't need Lonnie, haven't needed him for a long time, if you ever really did. It would just be another chance for Lonnie to toot his own horn: "Yeah, it's a good thing I came back to help out. Poor kid, Jonathan didn't even know how to tie his own tie. Kid really needs a father in his life; I don't know, sometimes I wonder if I could have been here, maybe this stuff with Will wouldn't have... Well, I guess we'll just never know." As if it was Mom's fault Lonnie ran around on her all the time and then came back mad and drunk. As if Mom hadn't sacrificed practically everything, including her own sanity, to try to hold their family together, only to have him throw it all back in her face. As if he'd ever been anything resembling a dad, whether you and Will were under the same roof as him or not. As if all this were anything except a big show.

Forget it, you think, ripping the tie off your neck and throwing it down. You're through behaving.